

# Working Together for Common Development



A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. China-Africa cooperation enjoys a promising future, though challenges and difficulties are inevitable.

By Tian Xuejun

The first 15 years of the 21st century have witnessed fast development in China and Africa, which is no doubt one of the most significant events in the world in this period of time. It was also a golden age for the rapid growth of China-Africa relationships. China and Africa have become a community of shared destiny, with deepened traditional friendship, increased political mutual trust, closer practical cooperation in various areas, and strengthened coordination and cooperation in

international and regional affairs.

A developing China will for sure bring enormous development opportunities to Africa, while an emerging and rejuvenating Africa will in turn inject an important impetus into China's development.

## **New opportunities for Africa and the world arising from the new development momentum in China**

In the past 66 years, since the founding of New China, and particularly in the past 30 years

since the launch of the reform and opening-up programme, China has scored remarkable achievements in its development. After the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2012, the new central leadership, with Xi Jinping as General Secretary, has put forth a new vision, and introduced new policies and measures on governance. Thus China is now standing at a new historical starting point with brand new features.

**China is more mature and**

**confident.** China has initiated and embarked on a path of socialism with Chinese characteristics, which serves not only as an important institutional guarantee for the great renewal of the Chinese nation, but also as a pathway and system that others may choose when striving for a better future for human society. In the past 66 years, China has made historic progress in social productivity and overall national strength. Its GDP increased from \$18 billion in 1949 to \$9.24 trillion in 2013, and its people were first lifted out of poverty, and then had enough food and clothing, and now enjoy a life of initial prosperity. China has never been closer to the goal of national renewal than it is today. What we have achieved proves that we have chosen correctly and we should therefore stay committed to the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Looking ahead, the Chinese people aspire to reach the two centenary goals, namely, to complete the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects when the CPC celebrates its centenary in 2021, and to turn China into a modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced and harmonious when the People's Republic of China celebrates its centenary in 2049. We have full confidence in realising the Chinese dream of the great renewal of the Chinese nation (see *The Thinker*, Vol 56).

**China is deepening reform in all respects.** Since the launch of reform and opening up, China's economy has achieved one miracle after another, proving time and again that reform is the inexhaustible driving force for development. China's sustainable development in the future must also be driven by reform and structural adjustment. The Third Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013 made the strategic decision to deepen China's reforms comprehensively, continuing to improve and develop the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, and modernise and capacitate the national governance system.

The new round of reform covers economic, political, cultural, social and ecological dimensions. Featuring 55

major tasks and more than 300 major measures, the reform is unprecedented in terms of scope, depth and difficulty. Its priority is the reform of the economic structure, the essence of which is to handle well the relationship between market and government, speed up the transformation of government functions and enable the market to play a decisive role in the allocation of resources.

In the mean time, it is important to promote reform in other areas. The reform measures have delivered initial results. In the first three quarters of 2014, China's economy grew at a rate of 7.4%, faster than all other major economies, and the quality and efficiency of growth also improved remarkably; 10 million new jobs

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were created in urban areas, with the registered unemployment rate standing at only 4.07%. Further deepening of the reform in the future will generate even more benefits.

**China is a more democratic country under the rule of law.** How to maintain social stability is an important task that requires serious thinking for the CPC and the Chinese government. To accomplish this task, the Fourth Plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee held last October decided to: comprehensively promote the rule of law; mobilise social resources, balance social interests, reconcile social relationships and promote norms of social conduct based on the rule of law; and ensure the sound and steady

development of the society. The plenary session put forth the goal of building a system serving the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and a country under the socialist rule of law. This means that China has entered a new stage of building the rule of law in China.

This effort to comprehensively promote the rule of law focuses on the following six aspects: improve a socialist system of laws with Chinese characteristics in which the Constitution is the core, and strengthen the implementation of the Constitution; promote administration by law and speed up building a law-based government; safeguard judicial justice and improve judicial credibility; improve the public awareness of the rule of law and enhance the building of a law-based society; build the ranks of legal workers; and strengthen the CPC's leadership in pushing forward the rule of law.

It is important to emphasise the distinction between the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics and Western constitutionalism. The latter stresses balance of power, electoral politics and interest groups. The core of the socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics, however, is the CPC leadership. It integrates the leading power of the ruling party, the dominant role of the people and the principle of the rule of law, and encourages the use of state power in pursuit of benefits for the people. To comprehensively advance the rule of law in China, a large developing country with 1.3 billion people, is an extensive and profound revolution in the field of national governance. It will surely have far-reaching significance for China's development and provide useful experience that we can share with other countries.

**China pursues more inclusive opening up.** In the age of globalisation, China is increasingly in need of the world for its development, and the world also needs China for its prosperity. China's opening up has come a long way. From policy trials to institutional harmonisation, China has gradually formed a high-level and all-dimensional opening-up structure. China's development is a great

contribution to the development and prosperity of the world. Between 1980 and 2012, China's GDP registered an average annual growth at about 10%, with the contribution rate to world economic growth rate averaged at 13.4%, which in 2013 reached a record high of nearly 30%. During the decade from 2003 to 2013, China imported an average of \$750 billion worth of goods per year, which is equivalent to creating more than 14 million jobs for its trading partners. China's foreign direct investment (FDI) reached a record high of \$107.84 billion in 2013. China has been one of the top three FDI investors for the past two consecutive years. Chinese enterprises abroad (including those in the financial sector) have paid \$37 billion of tax to local governments, and hired 967,000 local employees. It is anticipated that in five years, China will import \$10 trillion worth of goods, 500 million Chinese people will travel abroad, and its FDI will reach \$1.25 trillion in ten years. In addition to business cooperation, China has also contributed to the diversity of civilisations. The time-honoured history and rich culture of China are becoming increasingly popular and attractive to scholars and tourists across the world.

What has happened proves that a better developed and more open China means more opportunities for the world. China will unswervingly pursue peaceful development, promote the mutually-beneficial opening-up strategy and continue to uphold world peace and regional stability, contribute to world economic growth and participate in global governance reform. China and Africa are both promising land-masses full of vitality and diversity. In the past decade, Africa's growth has drawn the attention of the international community. Africa has indeed become a pole in three aspects: world politics, economy and civilisation. The fusion of Chinese development and African opportunities will surely create remarkable miracles.

#### **China-Africa cooperation for common development**

Working together with Africa for common development has always

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been a goal of China's foreign policy towards Africa. China and Africa enjoy natural affinity because of similar historical experience and our similar development goals have made us natural partners in the way forward. China and Africa are always good friends, good partners and good brothers sharing weal and woe.

**China and Africa are connected by friendship.** China and Africa enjoy a long-standing friendship. Zheng He, a Chinese explorer in the Ming Dynasty, arrived at the east coast of Africa during his voyage to the west, and the maritime Silk Road he opened up has since linked the destinies of China and Africa. China will never forget how our African brothers celebrated China's restoration of its lawful seat in the United Nations with dance and singing. African brothers and sisters, likewise, have not forgotten China's strong support for their efforts to fight imperialism and colonialism and seek national independence. The friendship between China and Africa has been

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tested by strife and wars as well as great changes in the world. The brotherhood and sisterhood of shared destiny is a valuable asset that we should always cherish.

**China and Africa share common aspirations.** The new leadership of China has put forward the vision of the Chinese dream and is leading the Chinese people in forging ahead for the great renewal of the Chinese nation. The African Union has drawn up Agenda 2063, which is an ambitious blueprint for Africa's development. The common goal of both the Chinese dream and the African dream is strength and prosperity of the many countries, revitalisation of the nations and happiness of the people. China-Africa cooperation will help make our dreams come true.

**China and Africa are close to each other in hearts.** The key to sound relations between countries lies in the amity among their peoples, which is based on the closeness in their hearts. We were deeply moved by African countries who offered China a helping hand, despite their own difficulties, when a massive earthquake struck Wenchuan, China, in 2008. The Chinese government and people have always cared about African development and the health situation in Africa. Within a few months after the outbreak of Ebola epidemic in some West African countries, China announced and delivered four tranches of aid worth 750 million yuan. Now over 700 Chinese epidemic prevention experts and medical staff are working hand in hand with their African colleagues in the affected countries to fight the disease and establish regional epidemic prevention system. This fully demonstrates the true friendship between our peoples.

**China-Africa cooperation is mutually beneficial.** During his visit to Africa in March 2013, President Xi Jinping put forward the guiding principle of "sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith" for China's cooperation with Africa. When Premier Li Keqiang visited Africa last year, he proposed a new framework of China-Africa cooperation, including a three-dimensional transport network and six projects (industrial, financial,

poverty reduction, ecological and environmental protection, cultural and people-to-people exchanges, peace and security), which marked a comprehensive upgrading of China-Africa cooperation. At present, guided and propelled by the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), our cooperation in areas such as development, investment and financing, African integration, peace and security, and people-to-people exchanges is forging ahead with greater speed, clearer development strategies, and broader converging interests.

**Working together for future cooperation.** African countries are striding forward towards industrialisation, integration and modernisation. Under the new circumstances of today, China's strategies of comprehensively deepening reform, transforming development modes and readjusting industrial structures are highly compatible with the strategic demands of Africa. The two sides should further strengthen strategic dialogue and experience-sharing on governance, promote pragmatic cooperation and upgrade the new type of China-Africa strategic partnership in an all-round way.

**Work together to pursue development and revitalisation.** Currently, China-Africa cooperation is opening a new chapter. China is ready to work with Africa to help it improve the continental infrastructure, speed up industry and technology transfer to Africa, achieve the coordination of industrial development strategies between China and Africa and enhance Africa's capacity for self-development. The two sides should strengthen cooperation in areas such as poverty reduction, agriculture, medical care, environmental protection and employment so as to make headway in poverty alleviation, realise food security and improve medical and health conditions in Africa. China will continue to support African countries' independent choice of development paths and is willing to share with them our development experience without any reservation. We will also support their efforts to find more practical and inclusive ways of achieving sustainable

development.

**Work together to maintain peace and stability.** China firmly supports African countries in solving African issues in African ways. China will continue to heed the voices from African countries, enhance our communication and coordination with Africa and work more actively to uphold peace and security in Africa. We will earnestly implement the Initiative on China-Africa Cooperative Partnership for Peace and Security, give positive consideration to assisting the development of an African Standby Force and African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises, support the development of collective security mechanisms in Africa, expand bilateral cooperation in personnel training, intelligence sharing and joint exercises and training, and help Africa

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to enhance its capacity building in peacekeeping, counter-terrorism and counter-piracy.

**Work together to promote friendship among our people.** China will step up its cultural interactions with African countries. We will make such brand programmes as the China-Africa Cultural Cooperation Partnership Programme, China-Africa Joint Research and Exchange Programme and the China-Africa People-to-People Friendship Action a success, and set up more Chinese cultural centres and Confucius institutes in Africa, with a view to enhancing cultural exchanges and helping friendship take deeper roots in people's hearts and minds. China will work through cooperation programmes in science, technology and education as well as enhanced

vocational training and other means to train more local professionals for Africa's development. We encourage more Chinese tourists to visit Africa and welcome African friends to China for visits, studying, investment and business.

**Work together to uphold the rights and interests of developing countries.** China and Africa have always respected each other's core interests and major concerns. China will continue to enhance strategic dialogue and coordination with Africa, strengthen collaboration and coordination in international and regional affairs, speak out in support of Africa's legitimate positions, safeguard the common interests of developing countries and work to increase the representation and influence of Africa and all developing countries in international affairs.

## Conclusion

A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. China-Africa cooperation enjoys a promising future, though challenges and difficulties are inevitable. To achieve stable and long-term cooperation, it is crucial for us to closely focus on the theme of common development, enrich our cooperation, use innovative approaches to cooperation and enhance the China-Africa relationship.

South Africa is a country with important influence in Africa. China and South Africa both attach great importance to the bilateral relationship and see it as a strategic pillar and priority in their foreign relations. Meanwhile, China-South Africa relations have exceeded their bilateral dimension and gained increasing global importance. Last year, the “Year of South Africa” was successfully celebrated in China and President Zuma's state visit to China was a full success. This year, South Africa will hold “Year of China” activities and host the FOCAC meeting. There will be a series of important activities between China and South Africa and between China and Africa. China is ready to take this as an opportunity to join hands with friends from all sectors in South Africa, give full play to the leading role of China-South Africa relations, and lift China-Africa cooperation to a new height. ■